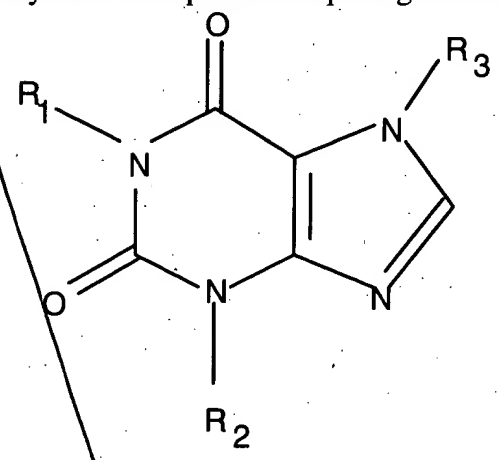
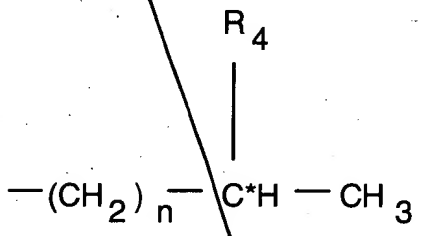
We claim:

1. A selectively stable compound comprising the formula I:



I

wherein one of R_1 or R_2 is independently an aliphatic hydrocarbon having the formula II:



II

;

R_1 or R_2, which is other than formula II, and R_3 are independently $C_{(1-12)}$ alkyl; and wherein:

C* is a chiral carbon atom;

n is an integer from about four to about eight;

R_4 is an amino acid or carbohydrate attached to the chiral carbon atom C* by an ester linkage, or -O-X-$(R_5)_m$; m being two or three and X being selected from the group consisting of C, P or S; wherein:

R_5 is a member selected from the group consisting of:

hydrogen atom;

hydroxyl group;

=O;

substituted or unsubstituted $C_{(1-10)}$ alkyl, $C_{(1-10)}$ alkenyl, $C_{(1-10)}$ alkynyl, $C_{(1-10)}$ alkoxyl, $C_{(1-10)}$ oxoalkyl, or $C_{(1-10)}$ acetoxyl, $C_{(1-10)}$ carboxyalkyl or $C_{(1-10)}$ hydroxyalkyl group;

-OR_6, R_6 being a substituted or unsubstituted $C_{(1-10)}$ alkyl, $C_{(1-10)}$ alkenyl or $C_{(1-10)}$ alkynyl, or $C_{(1-10)}$ oxoalkyl; and

substituted or unsubstituted cyclic or heterocylic group having from one- to three-rings, each ring containing from four to seven atoms.

2. The compound of claim 1, wherein the amino acid is selected from the group consisting of: alaninyl, argininyl, asparaginyl, aspartyl, cysteinyl, glutaminyl, glutamyl, glycinyl, histidinyl, isoleucinyl, leucinyl, lysinyl, methioninyl, phenylalaninyl, prolinyl, serinyl, threoninyl, tryptophanyl, tyrosinyl and valinyl.

3. The compound of claim 1, wherein the carbohydrate is selected from the group consisting of: glucosyl, glucosidyl, maltosyl, glucopyranosidyl, glyceraldehydyl, erythrosyl, arabinosyl, ribolucosyl, fructosyl, erythritolyl, xylosyl, lyxosyl, allosyl, altrosyl, mannosyl, mannosidyl, gulosyl, idosyl, galactosyl and talosyl.

4. The compound of claim 1, wherein X is C.

5. The compound of claim 1, wherein m is two and at least one R_5 is =O.

6. The compound of claim 1, wherein substituents for the substituted $C_{(1-10)}$ alkyl, $C_{(1-10)}$ alkenyl, $C_{(1-10)}$ alkynyl, $C_{(1-10)}$ alkoxyl, $C_{(1-10)}$ oxoalkyl, or $C_{(1-10)}$ acetoxyl, cyclic or heterocylic groups are selected from the group consisting of amido, amino, $C_{(1-6)}$ alkenyl, $C_{(1-6)}$ alkyl, $C_{(1-6)}$ alkoxyl, primary, secondary or tertiary $C_{(1-6)}$ hydroxyalkyl, $C_{(1-6)}$ oxoalkyl, azido, carbonyl, carboxylic acid, cyano, $C_{(1-6)}$ haloalkyl, isocyano, isothiocyano, phosphatyl, phosphonatyl, sulfonatyl, sulfonyl, sulfoxyl, imino, thioamido, thiocarbonyl, thioalkoxyl, thioloxoalkyl and thio groups or a single atom.

7. The compound of claim 6, wherein the $C_{(1-6)}$ haloalkyl is a mono-, di- or tri-haloalkyl and the $C_{(1-6)}$ alkoxyl is a methoxy or ethoxy group.

8. The compound of claim 6, wherein the single atom is selected from the group consisting of chlorine, bromine, fluorine and oxygen.

9. The compound of claim 1, wherein the R_1 or R_2, other than formula II, contains one or two, nonadjacent oxygen atoms, each oxygen atom replacing a single carbon atom of the $C_{(1-12)}$ alkyl.

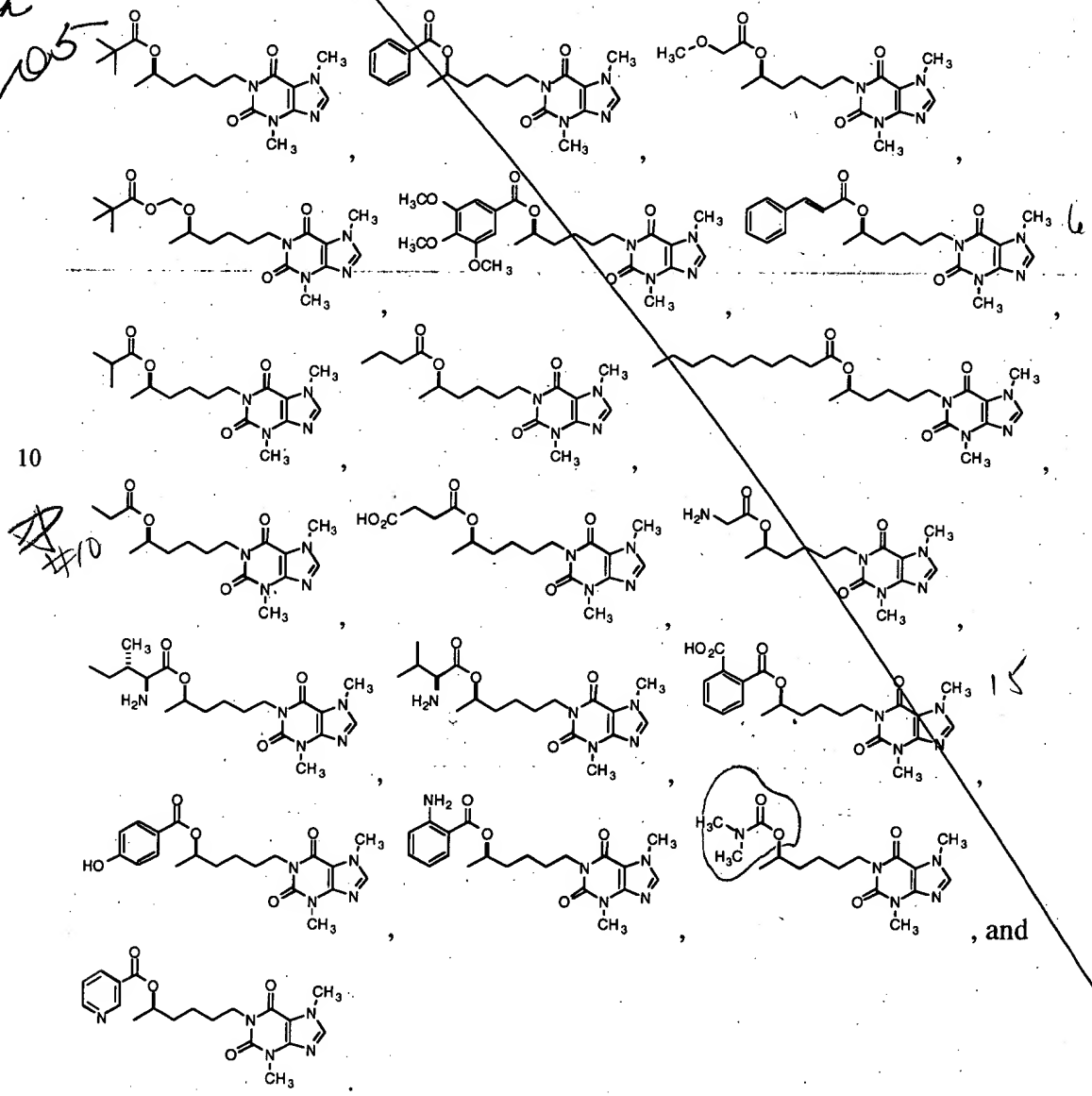
10. The compound of claim 1, wherein the cyclic or heterocyclic is selected from the group consisting of benzyl, phenyl, biphenyl, cyclohexyl, cyclohexenyl, cyclopentyl, nicotinyl, cyclopentenyl, cyclopentanedionyl, napthlalenyl, phenolyl, quinonyl, cyclopropyl, cyclobutyl, cycloheptyl, cycloheptenyl, indanyl, indenyl, decalinyl, resorcinolyl, tetralinyl, α-tetralonyl, 1-indanonyl, cyclohexanedionyl, cyclopentanedionyl, dimethylxanthinyl, methylxanthinyl, phthalimidyl, homophthalimidyl, methylbenzoyleneureayl, quinazolinonyl, octylcarboxamidobenzenyl, methylbenzamidyl, methyldioxotetrahydropteridinyl, glutarimidyl, piperidonyl, succinimidyl, dimethoxybenzenyl, methyldihydrouracilyl, methyluracilyl, methylthyminyl, piperidinyl, dihydroxybenzenyl, methylpurinyl, methylxanthinyl and dimethylxanthinyl.

11. The compound of claim 1, wherein ~~n is 4~~, m is 2, and R_2 and R_3 are methyl and at least one R_5 is =O.

12. The compound of claim 11, wherein the other R_5, other than =O, is selected from the group consisting of trimethoxy-substituted phenyl, phenolyl and benzamino.

13. The compound of claim 1, wherein R_4 is glycinyl, isoleucinyl or valinyl.

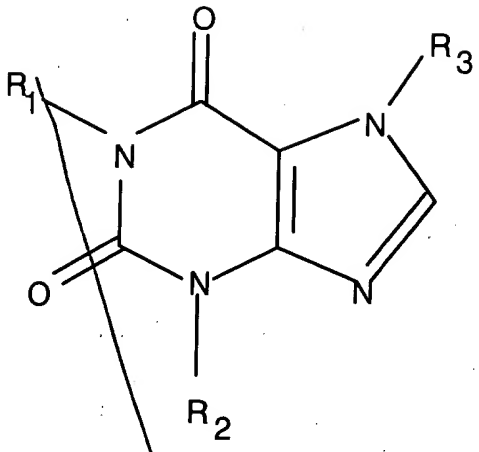
14. The compound of claim 1, wherein the compound is selected from:



, and

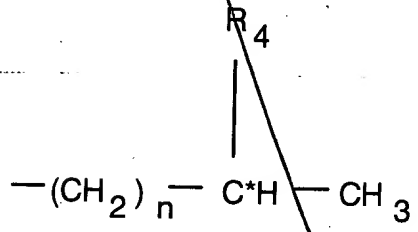
15. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient or carrier and a compound having the following formula I:

a5 cont



I

wherein one of R_1 or R_2 is independently an aliphatic hydrocarbon having the formula II:



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R_1 or R_2, which is other than formula II, and R_3 are independently $C_{(1-12)}$ alkyl; and wherein:

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R_4 is an amino acid or carbohydrate attached to the chiral carbon atom C* by an ester linkage, or -O-X-$(R_5)_m$; m being two or three and X being selected from the group consisting of C, P or S; wherein:

R_5 is a member selected from the group consisting of:

hydrogen atom;

hydroxyl group;

=O;

substituted or unsubstituted $C_{(1-10)}$ alkyl, $C_{(1-10)}$ alkenyl, $C_{(1-10)}$ alkynyl, $C_{(1-10)}$ alkoxyl, $C_{(1-10)}$ oxoalkyl, or $C_{(1-10)}$ acetoxyl, $C_{(1-10)}$ carboxyalkyl or $C_{(1-10)}$ hydroxyalkyl group;

-OR_6, R_6 being a substituted or unsubstituted $C_{(1-10)}$ alkyl, $C_{(1-10)}$ alkenyl or $C_{(1-10)}$ alkynyl, or $C_{(1-10)}$ oxoalkyl; and

substituted or unsubstituted cyclic or heterocylic group having from one- to three-rings, each ring containing from four to seven atoms.

16. The pharmaceutical composition of claim 15, wherein the pharmaceutical composition is formulated for oral administration.

17. The pharmaceutical composition of claim 15, wherein n is 4, R_4 is -O-X-$(R_5)_m$, m is 2, R_2 and R_3 are methyl and at least one R_5 is =O.

18. The pharmaceutical composition of claim 15, wherein R_5 is selected from the group consisting of trimethoxy-substituted phenyl, phenolyl and benzamino.

19. The pharmaceutical composition of claim 15, wherein R_4 is glycinyl, isoleucinyl or valinyl.